

Robert Alexander Kennedy Runcie (1921-2000)

Oct. 2021

I am writing this on my way back to Devon from London having attended Evensong at Canterbury Cathedral on October 2nd, a service dedicated to former **Archbishop Robert Runcie** #2592 on the web family tree, on what would have been his 100th birthday. My attendance exemplifies one of the many privileges which have fallen to me in my role as keeper.

Born in Birkenhead and educated at Merchant Taylors' School and Bresenose College, Oxford, Robert Runcie was commissioned into the Scots Guards and joined their 3rd Tank Battalion for Operation Overlord, the D-Day landings in Normandy in 1944, was awarded a Military Cross for two acts of outstanding bravery and was at the liberation of the infamous Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in May 1945.

Having studied for ordination at Westcott House, been appointed a Fellow and Dean of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, where he met his wife **Lindy**, #2588 and been Principal of Cuddesdon Theological College, he was consecrated Bishop by **Michael Ramsey** at Westminster Abbey in February 1970 and selected as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1979. His archiepiscopate was a troubled time in Britain but inter alia he will be remembered for marrying the **Prince of Wales** and **Lady Diana Spencer**, a marriage which he felt privately would fail, and for his kneeling in prayer in Canterbury Cathedral with **Pope John Paul II** in his attempt at reconciliation between the Anglican Church and Rome.

His Church life was eruditely described during the service by **Lord Chartres**, the former Bishop of London who was previously his chaplain, in an address that was intimate, heartfelt and inspirational. Listening, one knew immediately that he was a consummate professional who knew his subject absolutely. Hence, it was a joy to listen to him and I am seeking a copy of his address for the archive.

Anthony Cobbold

Pic 1 Caption: Archbishop Robert Runcie

Pic 2 Caption: Bishop Richard Chartres